

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
<p>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</p>				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave Blank)	2. REPORT DATE <i>May 85</i> Oct. 1984 - Sep. 1986	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Significant Political-Military Developments in Sub-Saharan Africa			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) LaVerle Berry, Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, T. Robert Lenaghan, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, Rachel Warner				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Federal Research Division Library of Congress Washington, DC 20540-4840			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Prepared under an Interagency Agreement				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) A monthly open-source summary of important strategic, political, and military events in sub-Saharan Africa organized by region, country, and date of event. <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">19960123 010</div>				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Africa, Sub-Sahara Government Politics National security			15. NUMBER OF PAGES Various lengths	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR	

**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

May 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
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PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, and Rachel Warner.

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East Africa

- Sudan
16/05/85 The Sudanese Trade Union sponsors a rally in Khartoum in which approximately 1,000 people participate to protest the delay in the return to civilian rule. The participants call for the abrogation of laws passed under the Numeiri regime and the lifting of the state of emergency. The demonstration, reminiscent of the riots that sparked the downfall of former President Numeiri, is a strong sign of opposition to the continuing rule of the Transitional Military Council.
- 19/05/85 Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi arrives in Sudan for talks with Sudan's Transitional Military Council on developments in the Horn of Africa and on improving bilateral relations. Qadhafi's visit reflects Sudan's new foreign policy aimed at improving ties with neighboring countries. Sudanese military officials hope to persuade Libya to withdraw support for the Sudanese People's Liberation Army so that the Sudanese leadership will be able to concentrate on resolving its internal conflict.

East/Central Africa

- Uganda
20/05/85 Ugandan Government sources claim that National Resistance Movement (NRM) guerrillas have been routed from their Luwero bases and have fled westward. The NRM, contradicting government reports, claims to have expanded its front 200 miles west to the Rwenzori mountains.
- Zaire
11/05/85 President Mobutu arrives in Israel for his first official visit since diplomatic relations were reestablished between Zaire and Israel in 1982. This visit confirms the impetus the two countries have given to their relations, the most significant example of which is the financial commitment of the Israeli Timman group, the largest investment Israel has made in Zaire since the latter's independence.

Horn of Africa

- Ethiopia
00/05/85 A 2-month government offensive against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), that included large-scale ground and air operations, ends in mid-May. Government troops are reported to have returned to the fortified town of Enda Selassi. The TPLF claims it killed 2,200 government troops, downed a Mig-23, and captured several tanks during the

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offensive. Reporting on the fighting in Tigray cannot be verified.

00/05/85 There is little fighting in Eritrea during May. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) reports only one ambush in which guerrillas killed two Ethiopian soldiers on the Nakfa front.

22/05/85 The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) expands its operations in Welega Province, in western Ethiopia, after having launched at least a dozen small-scale attacks since March.

31/05/85 Ethiopia indicates that it is willing to cooperate with US relief groups interested in distributing food to rebel-held areas in the north where there are an estimated 2.3 million famine victims. This cooperation, a major policy shift, would reduce or eliminate attempts by relief groups to send food from Sudan to the contested areas.

Somalia

08/05/85 The Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS) alleges that South Africans are transporting military hardware to Somalia, using Somali airports, modernizing Kismayu port, and building housing and offices for South African officers and workers near Kismayu.

14/05/85 The Somali National Movement (SNM) claims that it attacked Somali Government troops at a village in Luuq District in southern Somalia. Previous SNM attacks have been restricted to northern Somalia.

28/05/85 The DFSS reports expelling eight members, including three Executive Committee members, an indication that the insurgent group's leadership problems continue.

Indian Ocean Islands

Comoros

18/04/85 It is announced in Paris by the political secretary of the French representation of the Democratic Front, a Comoran opposition party, that between 400 and 600 Democratic Front activists had been arrested following the coup attempt by part of the Presidential Guard in March. The political secretary claims that Comoran President Abdallah had used

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the coup attempt as an opportunity to discredit the Democratic Front.

Southern Africa

Angola

11/05/85 UNITA claims that it occupied the Luo Diamond Mine and captured a British technician. The Luo Diamond Mine is located 100 kilometers from the border between Angola and Zaire and southeast of Lucapa, one of the most important diamond centers in Luanda Province.

Botswana

15/05/85 A powerful car bomb kills a black South African political refugee in Gaborone. Police identify the victim, Vernon Nkadimeng, as the son of the General Secretary of the banned South African Congress of Trade Unions. The blast, near a primary school for children of expatriates, is the second one in Gaborone in 3 months.

Mozambique

27/04/85 A government spokesman announces that 40 people were killed and 7 wounded when RENAMO guerrillas attacked a remote settlement west of the capital the previous week. The dead included two part-time militiamen and a soldier who had been guarding the settlement. The guerrillas used mortars, bazookas, heavy machineguns, and knives in the attack.

03/05/85

During military negotiations between Portugal and Mozambique, Portugal agrees to send military instructors to Mozambique and is expected to supply Mozambique's army with uniforms. Military cooperation between Portugal and Mozambique began in 1982 with the signing of a military agreement. In 1983, Portugal helped set up an antiguerrilla training center in Manica, 80 kilometers north of Maputo. Portugal is also giving technical assistance to Mozambique's navy.

Mozambique/Malawi

03/05/85 Eduardo Arao, governor of Mozambique's Tete Province, claims that RENAMO guerrillas operating in his province flee into Malawi during attacks by Mozambican army troops despite the good intentions expressed by Malawi's President Banda to deny them shelter. Arao also claims that unidentified aircraft are supplying and arming the RENAMO guerrillas.

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Southern Africa

Mozambique/South
Africa

24/04/85 South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha announces that South Africa and Mozambique will establish a joint operation center on their border in an attempt to fully implement the Nkomati Accord. The Nkomati Operational Center will straddle the border near the site of the signing of the Nkomati Accord. Mozambican leaders have accused Pretoria of being unable or unwilling to restrain RENAMO activities which have been responsible for the near collapse of the Accord.

South Africa

01/05/85 Fourteen black South Africans are arrested for demonstrating in support of a campaign to pressure American businesses to withdraw investments in South Africa. The arrests are made during a day of continuing unrest and demonstrations.

13/05/85 More than 800 miners quit their jobs at the President Brand Gold mine near Welkom following fierce factional fighting between tribal groups that left 19 dead and 47 injured.

16/05/85 The first contingent of 120 black peace officers graduate at a passing out parade in Soweto. More than 80 of the peace officers will join the forces of law and order and wear distinctive uniforms, carry firearms while on duty, and have the authority to make arrests. The peace officers will come directly under the authority of black town councils whose counsellors have been a favorite target for black protesters.

20/05/85 The trial of 16 members of the United Democratic Front begins in the Natal Supreme Court. The accused face charges of treason, terrorism, furthering the aims of the outlawed African National Congress, and advocating communism.

25/05/85 The South African Government announces the decision to abolish the 17-year-old Prohibition of Political Interference Act, which forbids multiracial political parties. With its abolishment, political groups whose membership was hitherto restricted to one race may now recruit supporters from other races.

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30/05/85 It is announced that South Africa's Defence Force Chief, General Constand Viljoen, will take an early retirement at the end of October. He will be replaced by the present Chief of the Army, General Jannie Geldenhuys.

South Africa/Angola

23/05/85 South Africa admits that it has troops stationed secretly in northern Angola. The admission by Defense Force Chief General Constand Viljoen follows Angola's announcement that its armed forces had killed two South Africans and captured a third who were trying to sabotage an oil refinery in the enclave of Cabinda. The refinery, near Malongo, belongs to the American company, Cabinda Gulf Oil.

West Africa

**Benin/Burkina
Faso/Ghana**

04/15/85 Beninois President Mathieu Kerekou, Burkinabe President Thomas Sankara, and Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings hold a secret 2-day summit with a representative of Colonel Qadhafi in Burkina Faso. The summit, organized by Qadhafi, focuses on complaints from the three leaders about the conditions attached to Libyan foreign aid.

Ghana

00/05/85 Lieutenant Colonel J.Y. Asssasie, Political Counsellor for the economic development of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), visits Cuba for a month-long study of the political and economic integration of Cuba's analogous CDRs. Ghana's CDRs share responsibility for using locally available resources in national development projects.

Ghana/Nigeria/Benin

13/05/85 Clashes between Nigerian security forces and illegal aliens, stranded when Nigeria reclosed its borders, result in 40 deaths, according to the commanding officer of Benin's police post at the Benin-Nigeria border. The clashes occur when several truckloads of immigrants try to pull down barriers preventing their departure into Benin. Meanwhile, the Ghanaian High Commission in Lagos confirms that about 25 Ghanaians died in shooting incidents at the Seme border post.

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Ivory Coast/Burkina
Faso

00/04/85 Diplomatic relations between the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, thought to be on the mend following recent meetings between Presidents Houphouet-Boigny and Thomas Sankara, sour following the assassination in Abidjan of Burkinabe entrepreneur Valentin Kinda. Burkinabe officials subsequently accuse the Ivory Coast Government of routinely harassing Burkinabe nationals living in the Ivory Coast. Spokesmen for the Ivory Coast claim that the assassination was a political crime provoked by Kinda's assistance to anti-Sankara Burkinabe exiles currently living in the Ivory Coast.

Nigeria/Equatorial
Guinea/Ghana

00/05/85 Nigeria completes its second expulsion of illegal aliens with the departure by boat of 717 Ghanaians. Earlier, Equatorial Guinean agricultural workers had been expelled from the country. Nigeria's borders, closed for 14 months to combat smuggling operations, reopened in the beginning of May for 8 days to permit an estimated 200,000 aliens to leave. Delays left thousands stranded when the borders were closed again on 10 May. Meanwhile, Nigerian officials discount reports of violence during the operation and accuse Western journalists of resorting to inaccurate journalism in order to divide and discredit Africa.

Sao Tome and
Principe/Gabon

16/05/85 Following a 2-day summit in Libreville, Gabon, Sao Tomean President Pinto da Costa and Gabonese President Albert-Bernard Bongo emphasize their commitment to dialogue to resolve any misunderstandings between their two countries. Until recently, President Bongo has regarded his Sao Tomean counterpart with suspicion. Besides reflecting an emerging detente between Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe, the meeting provides further evidence of Sao Tome's shift from a Soviet to a Western orientation.

Togo

29/03/85 Colonel Koffi Kongo, a southerner in the Togolese army as well as a possible rival to President Gnassingbe Eyadema, dies from alleged sudden respiratory difficulties and cardiac arrest. Several other possible rivals to Eyadema have also met untimely deaths since the President came to power in a coup in 1967. Colonel Kongo had earlier been

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placed under military restriction following disagreements with Eyadema during recent training maneuvers with French troops.